RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

A LAW AND ORDER PUBLICATION

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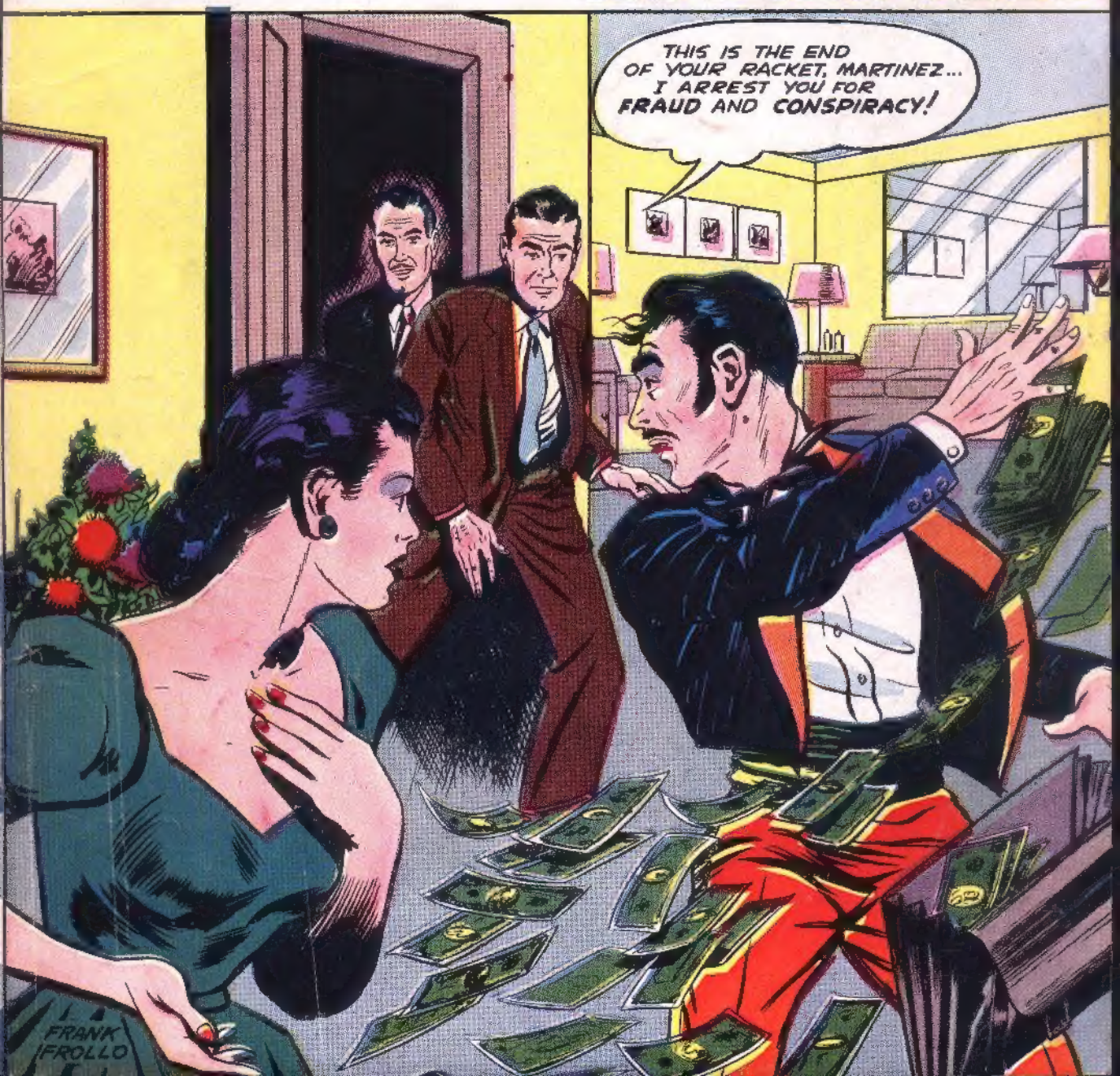

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TRAPPING THE DEPARTMENT STORE GYP ARTIST!
THE INSIDE FACTS OF THE HORSE THAT COULDN'T LOSE!
FRANK FIELD

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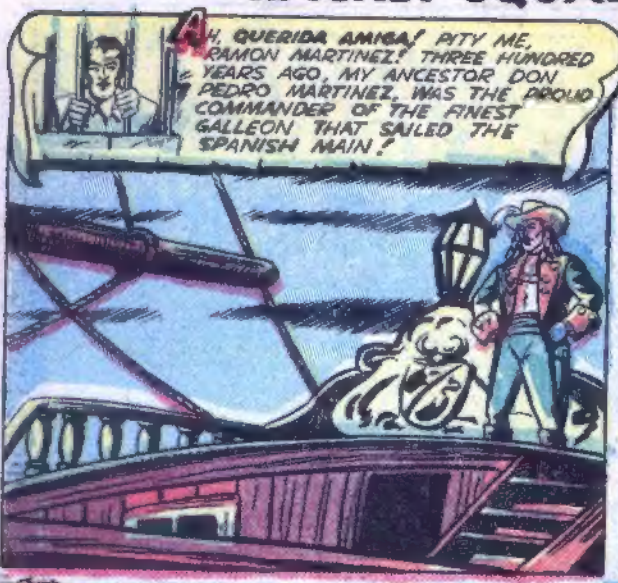
WATCH OUT FOR The SPANISH PRISON RACKET

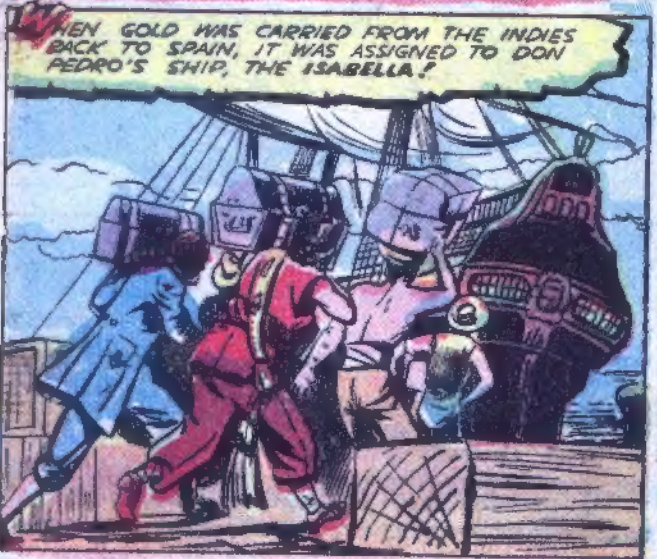
WELL, WELL, RAMON MARTINEZ, DO YOU THINK THAT ANYONE WILL BELIEVE YOUR STORY OF HOW YOU HAPPEN TO BE IN THIS CALABOOSE?
NOT NOW, THEY WON'T. BUT PLENTY DID BELIEVE MY STORY WHEN IT WAS A PHONEY!
J. J. O'MALLEY
OF ALL THE SUREFIRE CON GAMES, THE SPANISH PRISONER SWINDLE IS THE TOPPER... IT HAS THAT PERSONAL APPEAL THAT ALWAYS CATCHES THE SUCKER AND IT INVARIABLY DISPLAYS NEW TWISTS THAT ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE TIMES, AND THE SUCKERS... ONLY RECENTLY THE "PRISONER" DEAL DROPPED RIGHT INTO MY OFFICE OUT OF A CLEAR SKY AND THIS TIME, I WAS ABLE TO ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON MY OWN!

MY NAME IS CLAIRE PRESTON AND YESTERDAY I RECEIVED THIS LETTER FROM MEXICO, ASKING ME FOR $2500. I'D ALREADY SENT $5,000 IN ANSWER TO AN EARLIER LETTER...

LET'S START WITH THE FIRST LETTER. DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT SAID?
PERFECTLY! IT WAS SO EXPRESSIVE, SO FULL OF APPEAL! IT CAME FROM A MAN NAMED RAMON MARTINEZ, AND I CAN REMEMBER IT ALMOST WORD FOR WORD!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


AH, QUERIDA AMIGA! PITY ME, RAMON MARTINEZ! THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, MY ANCESTOR DON PEDRO MARTINEZ, WAS THE PROUD COMMANDER OF THE FINEST GALLEON THAT SAILED THE SPANISH MAIN!



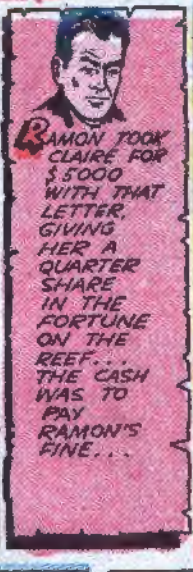
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

UNFORTUNATELY, DON PEDRO HAD ENEMIES IN THE SPANISH COURT.
DON PEDRO, I ARREST YOU ON THE CHARGE OF COWARDICE AND NEGLECT OF DUTY!
BUT YOUR MAJESTY, MY SHIP WAS DRIVEN BY THE STORM!
PREPOSTEROUS! HE WAS FOUND TOO FAR FROM HIS COURSE!
I DISMISS DON PEDRO MARTINEZ FROM MY SERVICE, WITH NO PRIVILEGE OF APPEAL! TAKE HIM AWAY!
SO FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, THE LEGACY WAS HANDED DOWN, BUT NONE FOUND OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK THE TREASURE...
UNTIL I, RAMON MARTINEZ, ARRIVED IN MEXICO, ONLY A YEAR AGO, WITH THE MAP OF MY ANCESTOR, DON PEDRO!
TO YOU, SEBASTIAN, MY SON, I GIVE THIS CRUDE MAP OF THE REEF WHERE THE ISABELLA SANK. SOME DAY, YOU MUST RECLAIM THE TREASURE!
POOR DON PEDRO. HE IS DYING OF A BROKEN HEART!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

SI, SI, RAMON! WE WILL HELP YOU LOOK FOR TREASURE ON TARANTULA REEF. BUT WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT MONEY AND A BOAT?
THAT IS EASY! WE BECOME SMUGGLERS AND WE GET BOTH!

SO NOW I AM DICTATING THIS LETTER FROM MY CELL IN THE PRESIDIO OF CIUDAD DEL SOL. YOUR NAME HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME AS SOMEONE VERY KIND AS WELL AS WEALTHY...


RAMON TOOK CLAIRE FOR $5000 WITH THAT LETTER, GIVING HER A QUARTER SHARE IN THE FORTUNE ON THE REEF... THE CASH WAS TO PAY RAMON'S FINE...

NOW COMES THIS NEW LETTER, SAYING RAMON IS STILL IN JAIL! THEY NEED $10,000 MORE TO RAISE THE TREASURE WHEN THEY FIND IT.
YOU MEAN IF THEY FIND IT...

MISS PRESTON, THIS IS CARLOS PEREZ, ONE OF THE BEST MEN ON MY STAFF. WHEN HE HAS READ THE LETTER FROM MARTINEZ, HE WILL TAKE THE NEXT PLANE FOR MEXICO AND GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS SPANISH PRISONER RACKET!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

MY CHOICE OF CARLOS PEREZ WAS PERFECT. HE WAS A PUERTO RICAN WHO SPOKE EXCELLENT SPANISH AND NO ONE WOULD CONNECT HIM WITH THE NEW YORK POLICE... SO CARLOS HOPPED TO CIUDAD DEL SOL...

AH, SENOR! WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE YOU VISIT OUR PRESIDIO. BUT IT IS VERY SLEEPY HERE. DURING THE LAST REVOLUTION, WE HAD MANY PRISONERS...

BUT NOW WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NONE! LOOK - THERE GOES OUR JAILER, JOSE. HE IS PRACTICALLY ON PENSION!
PRETTY PROSPEROUS, THIS JOSE, FOR A MAN ON PENSION!

WE ARE PLEASED, SENOR, TO HAVE YOU STOP AT THE HOTEL SPLENDIDE. YOU COULD MAKE NO BETTER CHOICE.
NATURALLY NOT, SINCE IT'S THE ONLY HOTEL IN TOWN! BESIDES I MIGHT SEE SOME INTERESTING PEOPLE!
Cafe

SI SENOR. THAT IS DON RAMON MARTINEZ, ONE OF OUR VERY SPECIAL GUESTS. HE EVEN HAS JOSE THE JAILER BRING HIM HIS MAIL FROM THE POST-OFFICE. IMAGINE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

FAR FROM BEING AN UNHAPPY PRISONER IN CIUDAD DEL SOL, RAMON IS THE STAR GUEST AT THE HOTEL SPLENDIDE, WITH JOSE, THE LOCAL JAILER, HELPING WORK A SUCKER LIST!
HEAR THAT, MISS PRESTON?
I CERTAINLY DID HEAR IT! BUT WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?
JUST THIS. WRITE A LETTER TO RAMON AT ONCE, OFFERING HIM $5,000 MORE FOR A HALF INTEREST IN THE TREASURE!
TELL HIM YOU KNOW OTHER PEOPLE WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS. SAY THAT YOU WILL GO TO MEXICO UNLESS HE CAN SEND SOMEONE HERE. THAT SHOULD BRING HIM.
BUT I DON'T SEE HOW THIS WILL BRING RAMON HERE!
SIMPLE ENOUGH! HE CAN'T LET YOU GO TO MEXICO AND FIND HIM OUT OF JAIL... AND HE WON'T RISK LETTING ANYONE ELSE COME HERE TO TRIM YOU!
WE GUESSED THAT CLAIRE'S LETTER WOULD CAUSE EXCITEMENT IN CIUDAD DEL SOL AND WE WERE RIGHT!
A LETTER FOR YOU, JOSE. BUT IT IS NOT THICK LIKE THE OTHERS!
PERHAPS PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE SO MUCH TO TELL ME!
EXAMINE THIS LETTER, RAMON, AND MAKE SURE I HAVE NOT ALREADY OPENED IT! THERE IS NO MONEY IN IT... THAT I CAN TELL!
TAKE IT EASY, JOSE.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

THAT GIRL IN NEW YORK WANTS TO BUY A DOUBLE SHARE OF NOTHING! I'M GOING UP THERE TO CLOSE THE DEAL!
BUT YOU CANNOT GO. YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE A PRISONER HERE!

NOBODY WILL KNOW WHO I AM. MEANWHILE, YOU WILL BE HANDLING THE MAIL THAT COMES HERE.
YOU ARE RIGHT. SO HURRY AND CATCH YOUR PLANE.

WHILE RAMON WAS MAKING PLANS TO LEAVE MEXICO, CLAIRE WAS ARRANGING TO RECEIVE HIM IN NEW YORK!
HERE ARE THE MARKED BILLS. BETTER KEEP THEM IN YOUR WALL SAFE. IT WILL LOOK MORE VALID.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

THE NEXT DAY
YOU ARE SENORITA CLAIRE PRESTON?
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU MUST BE SENOR RAMON MARTINEZ.
AH NO! POOR RAMON IS STILL A PRISONER IN CIUDAD DEL SOL. I AM HIS ATTORNEY, MANUEL GARCIA. I HAVE BROUGHT SIGNED PAPERS FROM RAMON.
RAMON WILL SELL YOU THE HALF INTEREST! HE WANTS TO REGAIN THE FORTUNE FOR THE HONOR OF HIS FAMILY MORE THAN MERE MONEY.
GOOD. HERE IS THE MERE MONEY.
SO COUNT IT, PLEASE, SENOR GARCIA.
SINCE YOU INSIST, SENORITA! ONE HUNDRED, TWO HUNDRED, THREE HUNDRED...
FIVE THOUSAND!
I'VE TAKEN IT ALL ON THIS TAPE RECORDER, INSPECTOR!
GOOD! NOW LET'S GET OVER TO THE CONNECTING DOOR!
HAS RAMON TOLD YOU I HAVE FRIENDS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE TREASURE, SENOR GARCIA?
YES... MANUEL GARCIA IS MOST HAPPY TO MEET THOSE FRIENDS!
8

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

OR SHOULD I SAY SENOR RAMON MARTINEZ!
YOU CALLED IT, CLAIRE. THAT'S RAMON MARTINEZ!
YOU HAVEN'T TRAPPED ME YET - NOT WHILE THERE'S ANOTHER WAY OUT!
OH-HO! THERE GOES A NICE DICTAPHONE!
YOU WANT THIS FELLOW, INSPECTOR?
WE CERTAINLY DO, HENNESSY!
LATER...
I AM HIS ATTORNEY, MANUEL GARCIA...
WE HAVE YOU ON SEVERAL COUNTS, RAMON. THE MARKED MONEY, YOUR USE OF A FALSE NAME, BOTH ARE PROOF AGAINST YOU.
BUT THEY HAVE EVEN MORE EVIDENCE IN MEXICO, NOW THAT YOUR RACKET HAS BEEN EXPOSED. SO CARLOS IS TAKING YOU BACK THERE!
COME ALONG. THE PLANE'S WAITING!
AFTER ALL, THE JAIL IS NOT CROWDED! AND IF YOU WRITE LETTERS TO YOUR FRIENDS, MAYBE THEY WILL GET US OUT!
NOBODY EVER HEARD OF A SPANISH PRISONER WHO WAS ACTUALLY A PRISONER, JOSE. THE RACKET DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY!
THE END

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

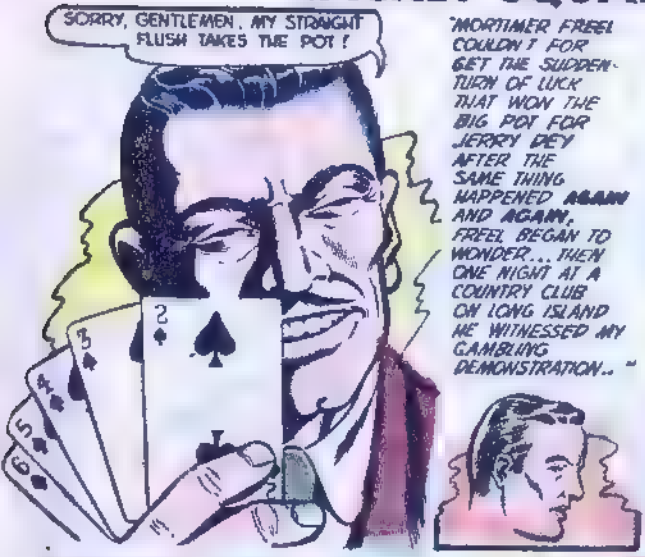
GAMBLERS NEVER GAMBLE!

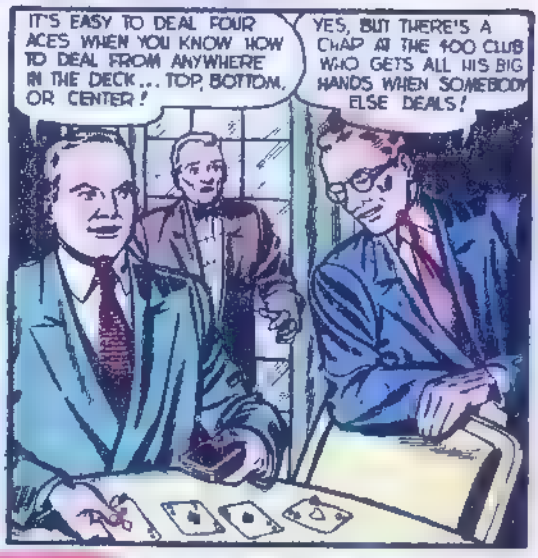
THEY JUST PUT THE GAME ON ICE WHEN THEY RING IN THE....

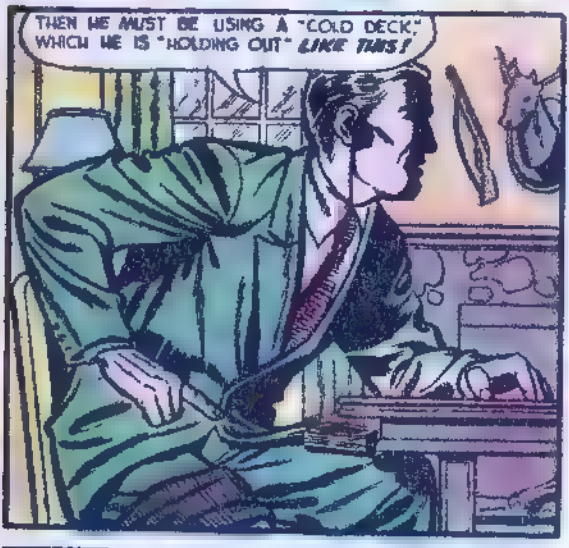
COLD DECK

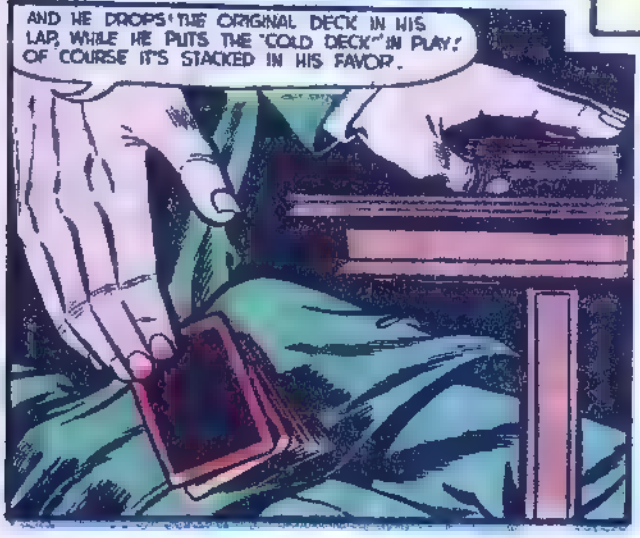
I'M SIDNEY RADNER OF HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS. I GIVE LECTURES AND DEMONSTRATIONS EXPOSING CROOKED GAMBLERS FROM COAST TO COAST. THERE'S ONE RULE THAT ALWAYS APPLIES TO GAMBLING RACKETS, "THE BIGGER THEY COME THE HARDER THEY FALL." BY THAT I MEAN JUST THIS. IT ISN'T IN THE CORNER CRAP GAME OR THE BACK ROOM POKER SESSION WHERE YOU'RE LIKELY TO FIND THE SMART OPERATORS. YOU'LL FIND THEM AT THE FINEST RESORTS AND THE MOST EXCLUSIVE CLUBS... LET'S GO BACK TO THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH, 1950 IN A PRIVATE ROOM AT THE SWANK 40🎱 CLUB ON FIFTH AVENUE...
I'VE SHUFFLED DEY. IT'S YOUR CUT
ALL RIGHT FREEL.
HOLD IT... HERE COME THE SANDWICHES AND DRINKS.
DICK GIORDANO
GO AHEAD FREEL... IT'S YOUR DEAL! LET'S HOPE I HAVE SOME LUCK FOR A CHANGE!
FULL HOUSE... KINGS UP!
TOO BAD FREEL, MY FOUR JACKS TOP THAT!

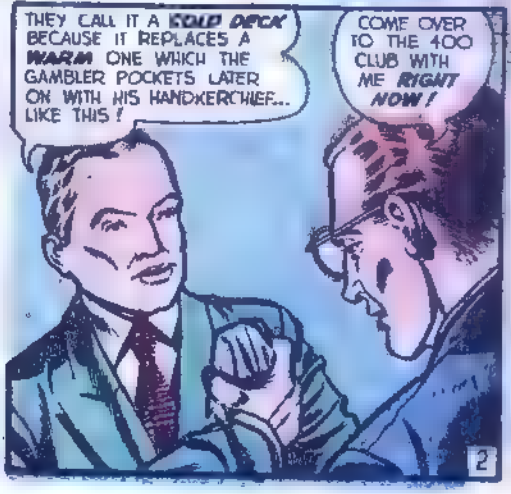
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


SORRY, GENTLEMEN. MY STRAIGHT FLUSH TAKES THE POT!
"MORTIMER FREEL COULDN'T FORGET THE SUDDEN TURN OF LUCK THAT WON THE BIG POT FOR JERRY DEY AFTER THE SAME THING HAPPENED AGAIN AND AGAIN. FREEL BEGAN TO WONDER... THEN ONE NIGHT AT A COUNTRY CLUB ON LONG ISLAND HE WITNESSED MY GAMBLING DEMONSTRATION.."

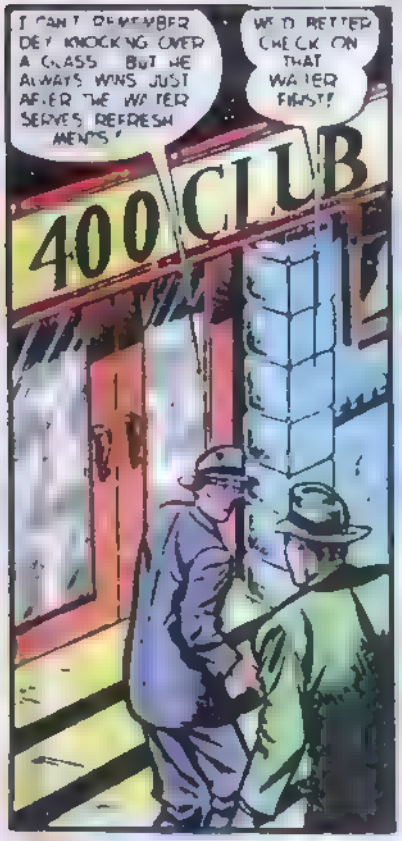

IT'S EASY TO DEAL FOUR ACES WHEN YOU KNOW HOW TO DEAL FROM ANYWHERE IN THE DECK... TOP, BOTTOM, OR CENTER!
YES, BUT THERE'S A CHAP AT THE 400 CLUB WHO GETS ALL HIS BIG HANDS WHEN SOMEBODY ELSE DEALS!






THEY CALL IT A COLD DECK BECAUSE IT REPLACES A WARM ONE WHICH THE GAMBLER POCKETS LATER ON WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF... LIKE THIS!
COME OVER TO THE 400 CLUB WITH ME RIGHT NOW!
2

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


I CAN'T REMEMBER DEY KNOCKING OVER A GLASS BUT HE ALWAYS WINS JUST AFTER THE WAITER SERVES REFRESHMENTS!
WE'D BETTER CHECK ON THAT WAITER FIRST!
400 CLUB

"IT DIDN'T TAKE FREEL AND MYSELF VERY LONG TO COMPLETE OUR PLANS FOR THE COMING GAME.. SINCE THE DECK WAS ALREADY SET, WE WERE SURE THAT JASPER THE WAITER, WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING BUT SWITCH IT.. AN HOUR LATER I MET JERRY DEY..."

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

WHILE WITH HIS OTHER HAND HE PICKED UP THE DECK THAT HAD BEEN IN PLAY AND TOOK IT AWAY UNDER THE TRAY ..

NOW ALL I HAD TO DO WAS PROVE IT!

I'M HOPING YOU DEAL ME THAT WILD JOKER, FREEL! IT'S TIME SOME LUCK CAME MY WAY!

WE CAN'T GO ON RAISING THE POT FOREVER, DEY. I'LL CALL YOU.

YOU DID THE SMART THING, FREEL. I WIN. WITH A ROYAL FLUSH!

HOLD IT DEY! I HAVE FIVE OF A KIND .. ALL JOKERS — AND THEY STAND FOR ACES!

THAT MEANS WE SPLIT THE POT, FREEL. MY HAND IS FULL OF JOKERS TOO!

THERE'S ONLY ONE JOKER ALLOWED IN A DECK OF CARDS!

AND THERE'S NO JOKERS ALLOWED IN THE 400 CLUB THAT GOES FOR JASPER, TOO GET OUT.. BOTH OF YOU!

IT WAS VERY SIMPLE. I SET A PACK WITH JOKERS EXCEPT FOR DEY'S HAND AND SUBSTITUTED IT FOR THE COLD DECK IN THE PANTRY. THEN FREEL AND I LET THE JOKERS DECLARE THEMSELVES!

THE 400 CLUB OWES YOU A VOTE OF THANKS, PARDNER!

JACK

THE BIG TIME BUILD-UP

Rackets generally fall into two categories: Penny ante deals and million dollar swindles.

In the first group we find carnival games where the "nickel gougers" and the "grifters" gyp their customers with "gaffed" devices that make it impossible for anyone to win. The same applies to many other petty rackets such as phoney lottery tickets and contests in which the winners are fixed beforehand.

The big time swindles of course include stock selling deals, oil wells that don't produce and any number of huge projects that attract suckers chiefly because of their magnitude. These take a lot of backing to put across.

Occasionally, a clever gyp artist will parley a small-time grift into a big time racket. A case in point is the numbers game which began as a local or neighborhood proposition and later grew to a national scale. But the really remarkable situation arrives when a million dollar front is used to put across a petty swindle.

One such swindle is the "Carbon Paper" dodge.

It begins in a used car dealer's office, where a man with an Australian accent makes his entrance, cheerily announces that he is from "Down Under" and in the market for American automobiles. He talks blandly of customs duties, getting money out of Australia and all the rest of it. But the wind up is that he can pay the dealer's price for certain makes of cars much wanted and needed in Australia.

He picks some thirty cars, totalling approximately $40,000 and makes a comprehensive listing of same. Tonight, he states, he will wire his Canadian office for authority to buy, rather than wait for word from Australia. However, it may take two or three days for confirmation.

By this time, the buyer is on very friendly terms with the used car dealer and why not? So when the Australian glances at his watch and begins wondering when the post office closes, his new friend naturally inquires the reason.

It turns out to be a mixup over some carbon paper. The Australian had ordered a lot from England, intending it to be shipped directly to Melbourne, but instead it was sent here to Boston, Massachusetts, where he is at present. It's a bit involved, you know, some duty to be paid and all that. A mere fifty dollars worth of very fine carbon paper, but what use is it here?

The annoyance of reshipment to Australia or even returning it to England is quite a problem in itself. By this time, if an idea hasn't struck the used car dealer, the Australian gets it on his own. He looks about the office and exclaims:

"Why, you must use a lot of carbon paper here! I should be glad to let you have the whole quantity at cost. Why not send someone with me right now to pick it up?"

Someone is sent with the fifty dollars. The messenger returns with the carbon paper. It turns out to be a job lot that was probably bought for ten dollars, though it is actually carbon, which is about all that the so-called Australian represented it to be. But after all, what does it matter while a deal for $40,000 is pending?

That's how the deal stays — pending. Actually, the real amount at stake was forty dollars, which the pretended Australian took for himself. He never comes back to close the big deal on used cars for export. Instead, he keeps going the rounds of other businesses. He prices a lot of billiard tables, he negotiates for a quantity of electric refrigerators, he talks to book publishers, typewriter companies, day by day.

Always, he remembers that package of unclaimed carbon paper at the post office. Sometimes it's at his hotel or in a locker at the railroad station. In any case, he sells such a package to each of the firms with which he has talked big figures on an export deal. At forty dollars a clip, he makes him-

self a rather nice total before he leaves Boston to work the same gyp on companies in Providence, Rhode Island.

This game with variations, has been an old favorite year in and year out, but it doesn't bring the fast results that some operators prefer, nor does it wear too well, once people generally begin to avoid buying carbon paper except from regular supply houses. The con man who likes to put up the big front is generally an opportunist, who is all the happier, the more lavish his pose.

His heydey was during the days of Prohibition, when he could pose as the son of a Scotch whiskey distiller, though his victims usually wound up referring to him in less complimentary terms. The distillery racket worked out much like this:

Into some seaboard city such as Philadelphia or Baltimore came a personable young man who called at a large department store and spread out the plan of a very fine looking yacht.

This he said, was his own private yacht. It needed repairs so he was having the yacht brought here from Bermuda, rather than attempt the long cruise back to Glasgow. It would be a good idea, he had decided, to have the yacht redecorated at the same time.

The upshot was that the young man ordered a large quantity of fine furniture and other decorations. Some of his conferences on the subject were held in his hotel suite, where he served some of the Scotch whiskey which his father manufactured. How he had brought in the Scotch during Prohibition was a subject that he at first avoided. Finally, however, he let it out.

The crew of the yacht, he said, had ways of their own for getting the stuff ashore. Not that he would be party to it, indeed no. But when his yacht arrived from Bermuda, he was quite sure that any number of cases of Scotch could be delivered to local purchasers who furnished the money in advance, so that it could be sent to certain members of the yacht's crew.

This spiel could only bring one result. The department store men insisted on handing over substantial sums of cash to the distiller's son. Not only they, but their friends did the same. The pool got bigger and bigger all in anticipation of the yacht's arrival. When it totalled a few thousand dollars, the distiller's son decamped, usually leaving an unpaid hotel bill. The yacht never did show up with its cargo of Scotch because the impostor wasn't the distiller's son. In fact the distiller didn't have a son and if he had, he wouldn't have given him a yacht.

Today, such opportunists operate differently, since they no longer have Prohibition to help them. One timely case occurred in San Francisco a few years ago. There, a large cargo steamer was put up for sale at a price of around $600,000 and a young man promptly flew in by plane from Seattle to make the purchase.

He had some plan for coastal trade that sounded very feasible, considering that he had inherited a few million dollars from an uncle in the lumber business. All he needed was a ship and this was it. So he made out a check for $600,000 and the deal was closed therewith.

His one trouble now was to get a hotel room, having hopped the plane in such a hurry. So the head man of the steamship line arranged for a suite in one of San Fransico's best hotels. As soon as he was established there, the young man from Seattle went to some of the largest clothing stores in town and bought himself new suits, shirts, shoes and all that went with it.

He had no trouble running up a charge when he gave his address as the swank hotel but when his bills reached sizeable proportions, as they did within a few days, the stores wanted better references.

What better could there be than his own steamship? The young man invited some of the store departments heads down to the ship, where he was piped on board as the owner and a large party thrown at the expense of the line that had sold him the vessel at such a tidy profit.

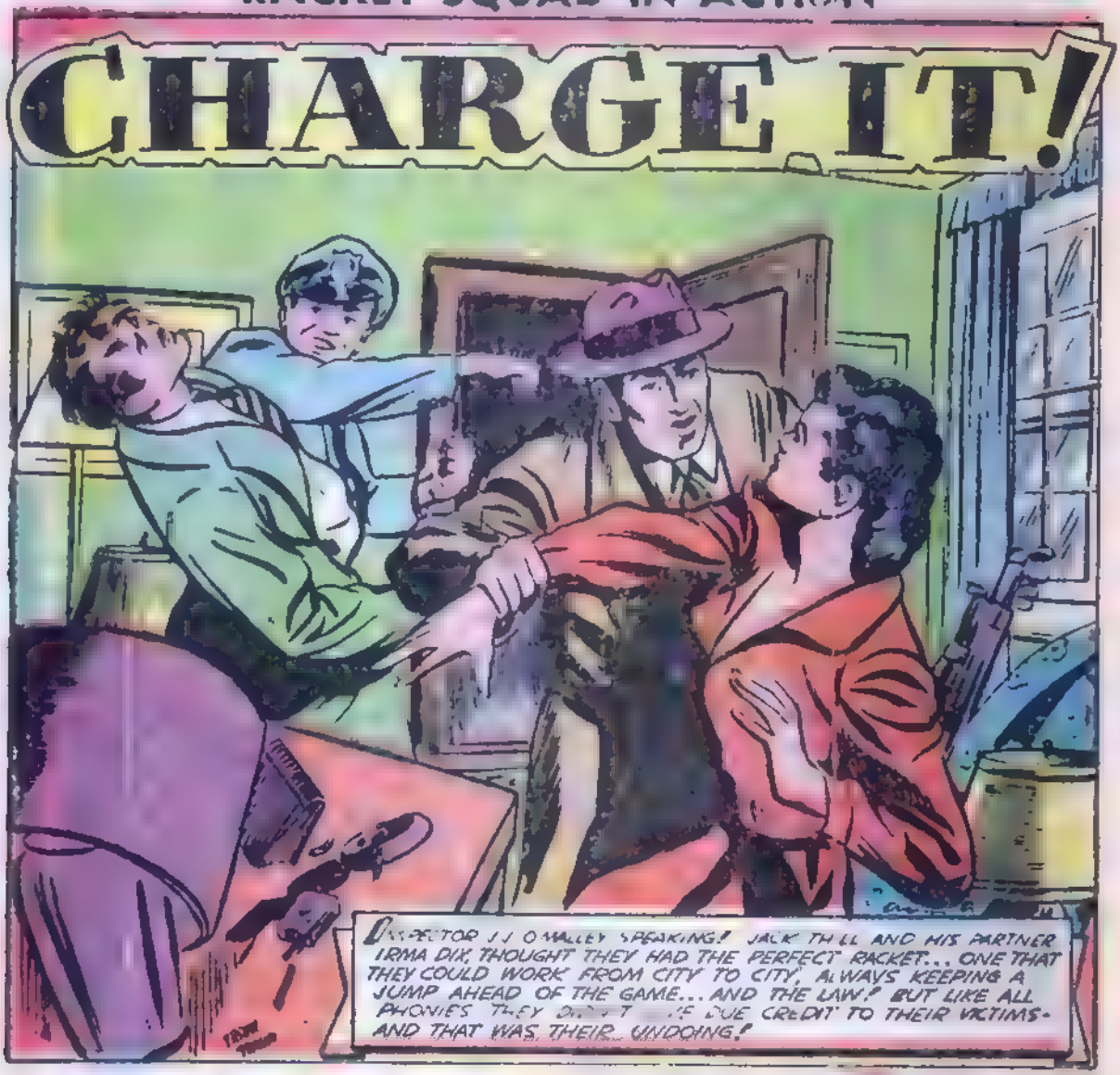
All went well until the $600,000 check reached the Seattle clearing house. There it was discovered that there wasn't any such account. The steamship line hadn't anticipated this with a check of such size, particularly as they still had their ship. In brief, the check didn't clear Seattle.

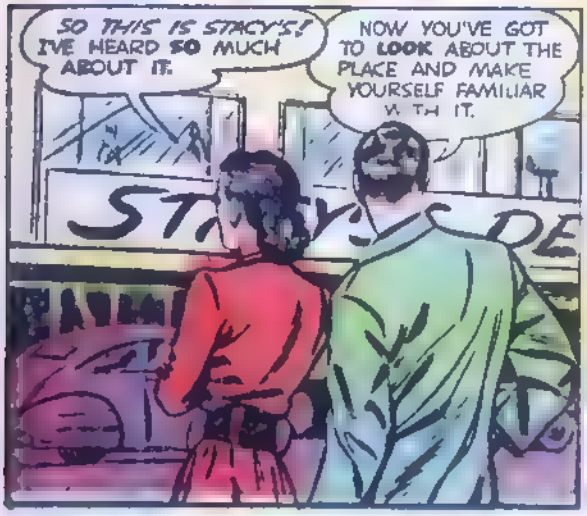
But by then the young man had cleared San Francisco, along with his new wardrobe and a lot of fancy suit cases that he had bought for travel. Naturally, he'd paid for all this with checks on the same bank in Seattle. He had used that non-existent account to cover his hotel bill as well.

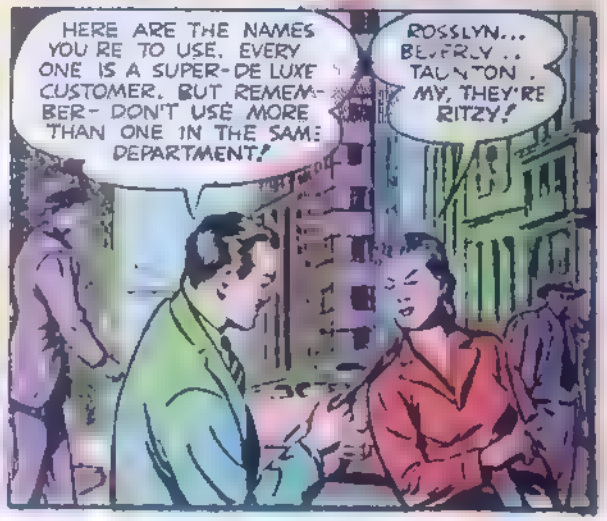
So watch out for the big time swindler who plays for small time stakes. The bigger they come, the phonier they are — sometimes.

The End

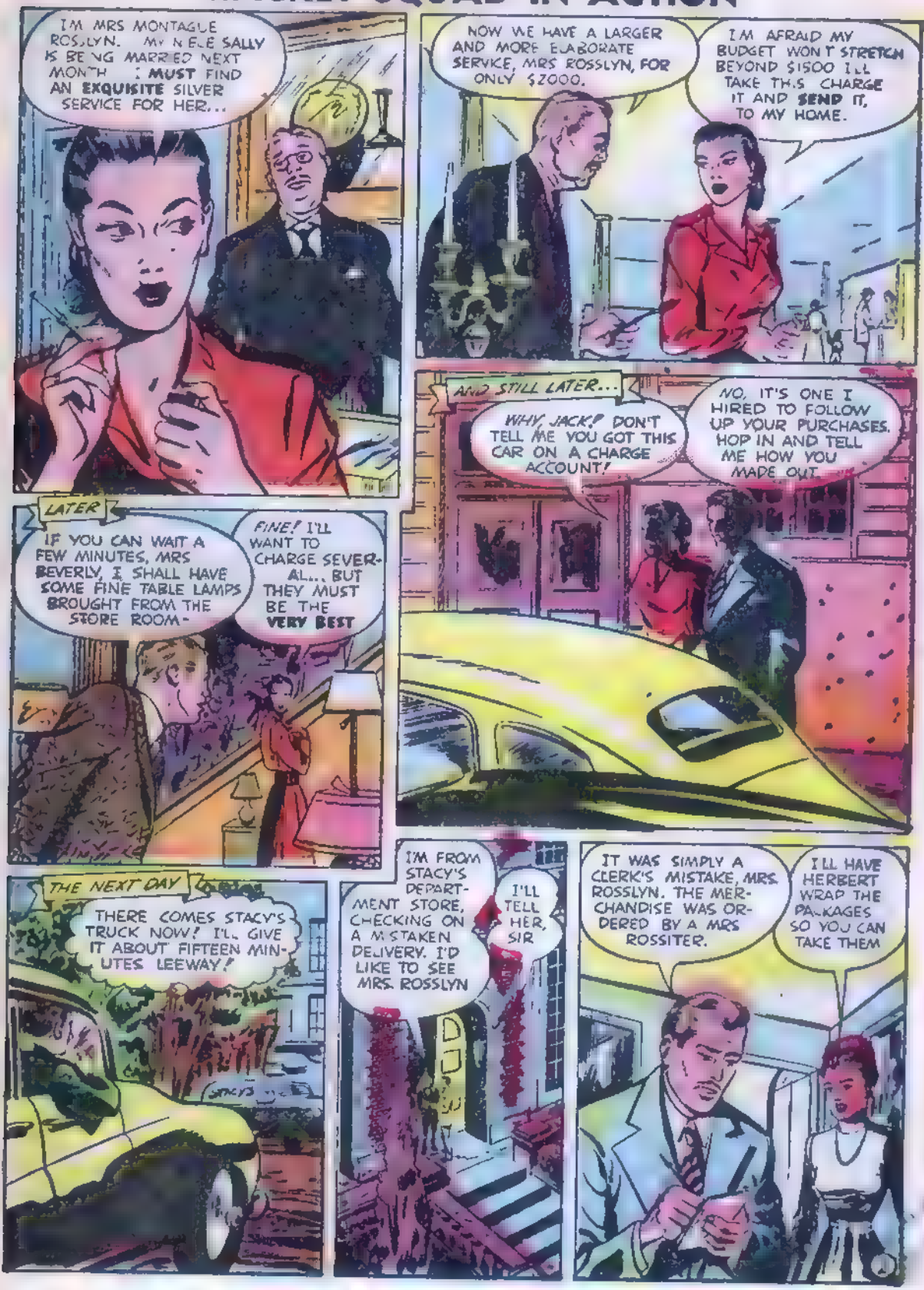
CHARGE IT!


INSPECTOR J J O'MALLEY SPEAKING! JACK THELL AND HIS PARTNER IRMA DIX, THOUGHT THEY HAD THE PERFECT RACKET... ONE THAT THEY COULD WORK FROM CITY TO CITY, ALWAYS KEEPING A JUMP AHEAD OF THE GAME... AND THE LAW! BUT LIKE ALL PHONIES THEY DIDN'T GIVE CREDIT TO THEIR VICTIMS- AND THAT WAS THEIR UNDOING!


SO THIS IS STACY'S! I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT IT.
NOW YOU'VE GOT TO LOOK ABOUT THE PLACE AND MAKE YOURSELF FAMILIAR WITH IT.


HERE ARE THE NAMES YOU'RE TO USE. EVERY ONE IS A SUPER-DE LUXE CUSTOMER. BUT REMEMBER- DON'T USE MORE THAN ONE IN THE SAME DEPARTMENT!
ROSSLYN... BEVERLY... TAUNTON... MY, THEY'RE RITZY!

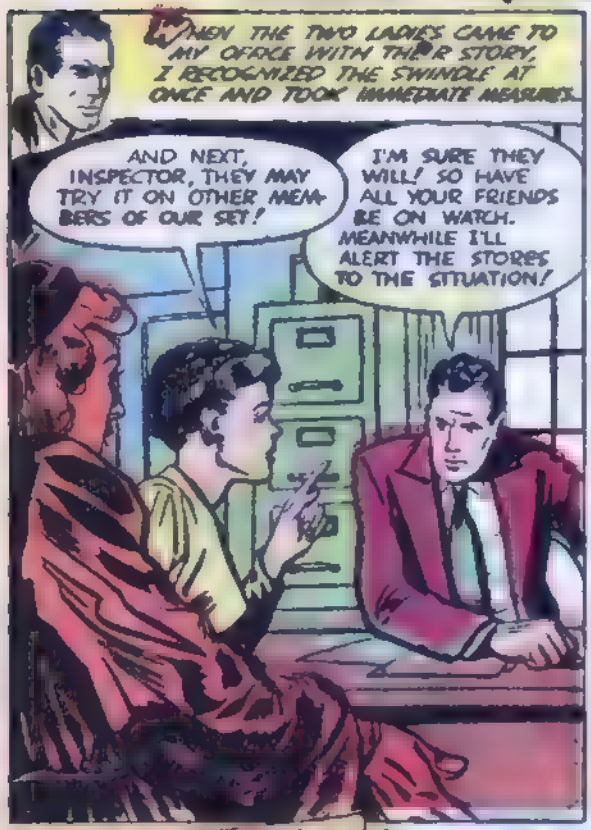
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

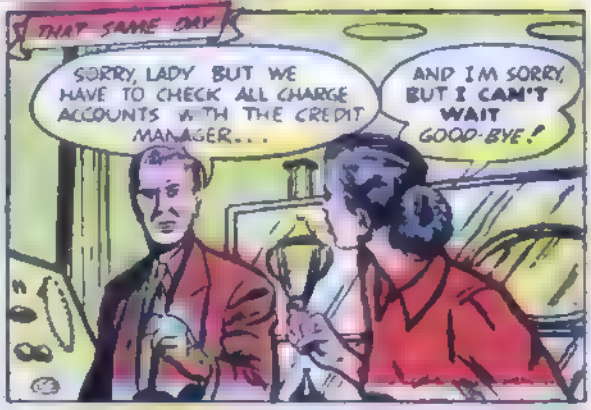

I'M MRS MONTAGUE ROSSLYN. MY NIECE SALLY IS BEING MARRIED NEXT MONTH ; MUST FIND AN EXQUISITE SILVER SERVICE FOR HER...
NOW WE HAVE A LARGER AND MORE ELABORATE SERVICE, MRS ROSSLYN, FOR ONLY $2000.
I'M AFRAID MY BUDGET WON'T STRETCH BEYOND $1500 I'LL TAKE THIS CHARGE IT AND SEND IT, TO MY HOME.
AND STILL LATER...
WHY, JACK! DON'T TELL ME YOU GOT THIS CAR ON A CHARGE ACCOUNT!
NO, IT'S ONE I HIRED TO FOLLOW UP YOUR PURCHASES. HOP IN AND TELL ME HOW YOU MADE OUT.
LATER
IF YOU CAN WAIT A FEW MINUTES, MRS BEVERLY, I SHALL HAVE SOME FINE TABLE LAMPS BROUGHT FROM THE STORE ROOM-
FINE! I'LL WANT TO CHARGE SEVERAL... BUT THEY MUST BE THE VERY BEST
THE NEXT DAY
THERE COMES STACY'S TRUCK NOW! I'LL GIVE IT ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES LEEWAY!
I'M FROM STACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE, CHECKING ON A MISTAKEN DELIVERY. I'D LIKE TO SEE MRS. ROSSLYN
I'LL TELL HER, SIR
IT WAS SIMPLY A CLERK'S MISTAKE, MRS. ROSSLYN. THE MERCHANDISE WAS ORDERED BY A MRS ROSSITER.
I'LL HAVE HERBERT WRAP THE PACKAGES SO YOU CAN TAKE THEM

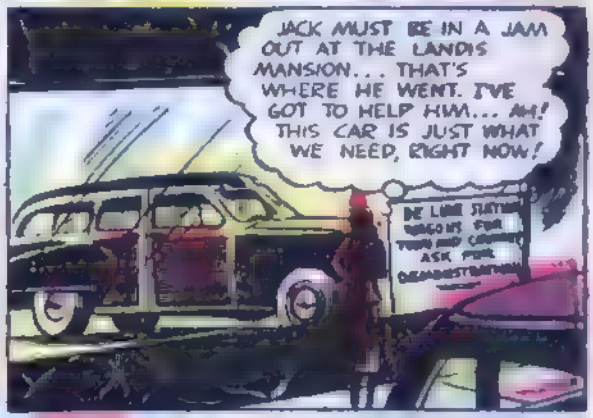
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

LATER...
WHY, I'VE SO MANY LAMPS NOW, I'D NEVER HAVE BOUGHT ALL THESE...
A CLERK'S ERROR, MRS BEVERLY. STACY'S IS SORRY
A NICE HAUL SO FAR IRMA... AND ALL WE'VE PAID OUT IS A MONTH'S RENT FOR THIS PLACE AND THE HIRE FOR THE CAR!
THEY WERE WORKING A FAST, SMOOTH RACKET, THIS PAIR.. THE FASTER THE SMOOTHER, SO THEY THOUGHT! IN A FEW WEEKS THEY HAD REALLY PILED UP THE LOOT AND WERE GETTING BOLDER..
THESE WILL LOOK SO, SO LOVELY AT OUR LODGE ON LAKE WINNEKOMA...
OF COURSE MRS LANDIS!
THEY REALLY FALL FOR THAT TALK OF WEDDINGS, LODGES, CRUISES...
NATURALLY, THEY CAN CHECK IT IN THE SOCIETY COLUMNS, TOO!
WHAT A LIST OF PICK-UPS YOU'VE GIVEN ME FOR TOMORROW. BY NEXT WEEK WE CAN QUIT!
WE'D BETTER. THAT'S WHEN THE SOCIETY DAMES WILL BEGIN GETTING BILLS FOR ALL THIS MERCHANDISE!
BUT THOSE SAME LADIES WERE ALREADY DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT! OVER THE CARD TABLE THEY WERE CRITICIZING THEIR FAVORITE DEPARTMENT STORES - AND ALL FOR THE SAME REASON!
IMAGINE STACY'S SENDING ME A WHOLE SILVER SERVICE BY MISTAKE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ALL THE LAMPS THAT CAME TO MY HOUSE BUT PERHAPS IT WASN'T A MISTAKE! LET'S ASK THE POLICE!
3

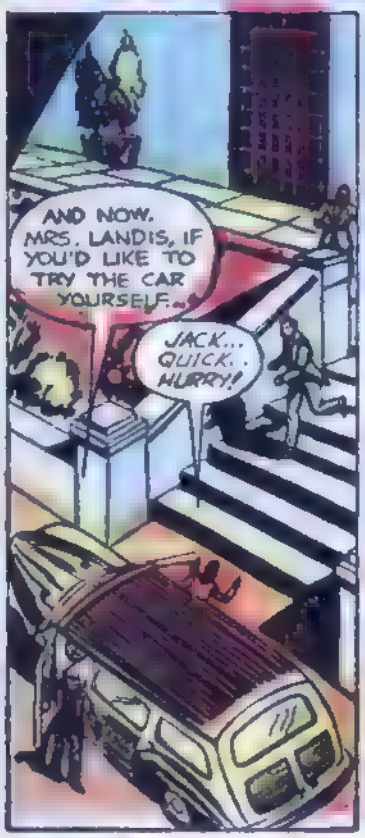
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


WHEN THE TWO LADIES CAME TO MY OFFICE WITH THEIR STORY, I RECOGNIZED THE SWINDLE AT ONCE AND TOOK IMMEDIATE MEASURES.
AND NEXT, INSPECTOR, THEY MAY TRY IT ON OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR SET!
I'M SURE THEY WILL! SO HAVE ALL YOUR FRIENDS BE ON WATCH. MEANWHILE I'LL ALERT THE STORES TO THE SITUATION!

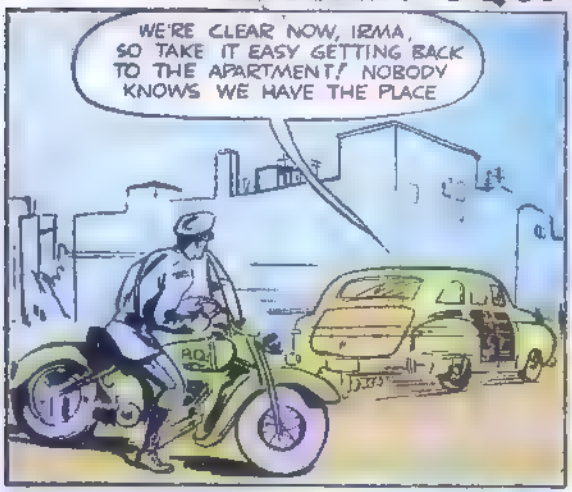

THAT SAME DAY
SORRY, LADY BUT WE HAVE TO CHECK ALL CHARGE ACCOUNTS WITH THE CREDIT MANAGER...
AND I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T WAIT GOOD-BYE!

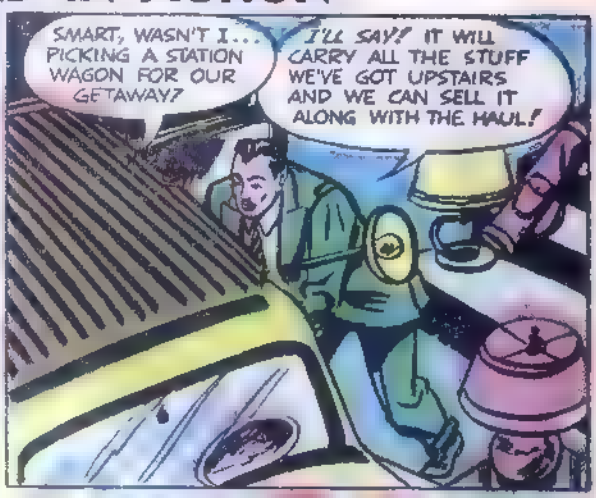

JACK MUST BE IN A JAM OUT AT THE LANDIS MANSION... THAT'S WHERE HE WENT. I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM... AH! THIS CAR IS JUST WHAT WE NEED, RIGHT NOW!

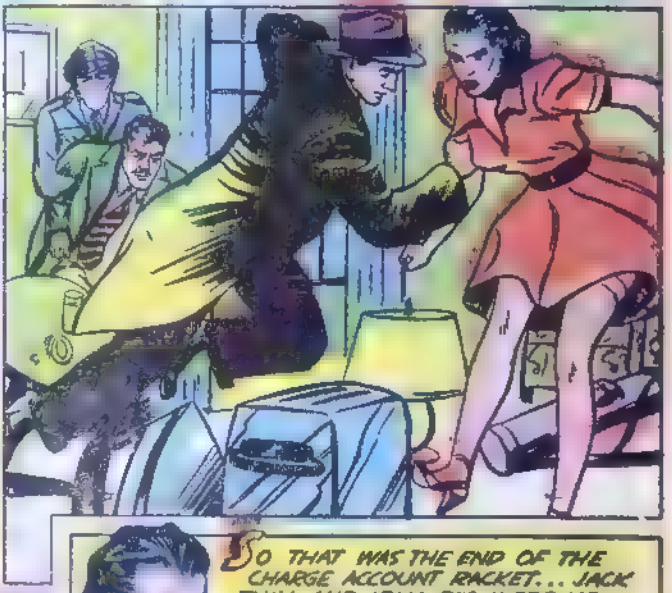
MEANWHILE - JACK WAS FINDING HIMSELF IN TROUBLE!
I'M TELLING YOU, THIS IS A MISTAKE.. I WANT MY CAR...
YOUR CAR IS SAFELY IN THE GARAGE, SIR. IT WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU AFTER INSPECTOR O'MALLEY ARRIVES. MRS. LANDIS HAS PHONED HIM...

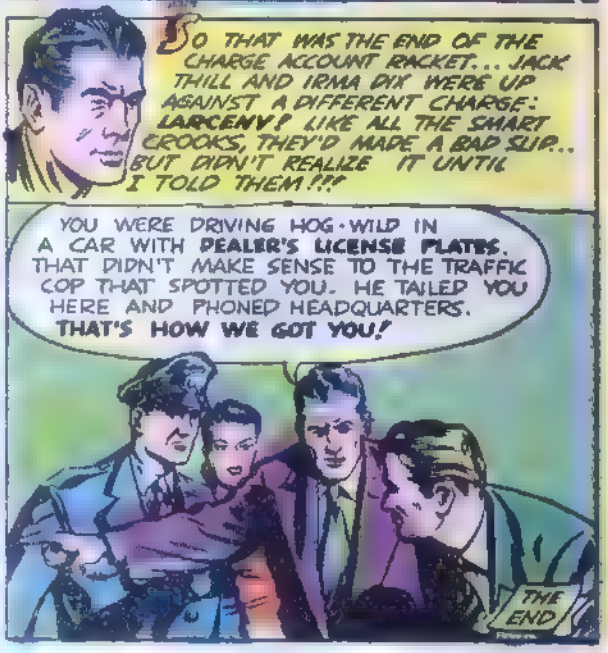


RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION




SMART, WASN'T I... PICKING A STATION WAGON FOR OUR GETAWAY?
I'LL SAY! IT WILL CARRY ALL THE STUFF WE'VE GOT UPSTAIRS AND WE CAN SELL IT ALONG WITH THE HAUL!



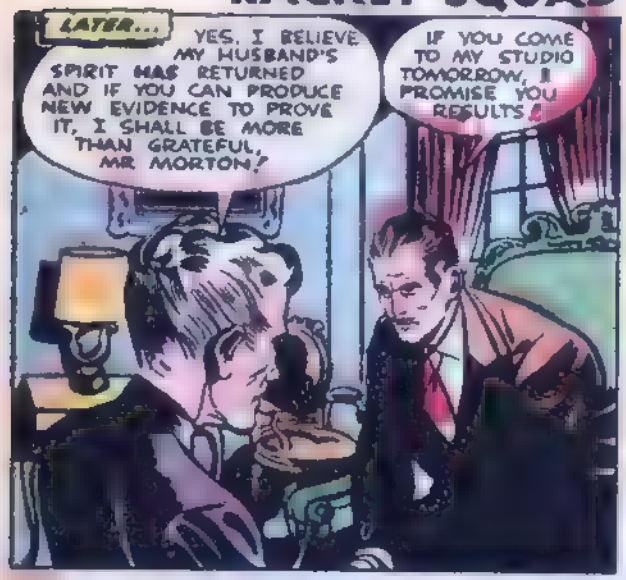

SO THAT WAS THE END OF THE CHARGE ACCOUNT RACKET... JACK THILL AND IRMA DIX WERE UP AGAINST A DIFFERENT CHARGE: LARCENY! LIKE ALL THE SMART CROOKS, THEY'D MADE A BAD SLIP.. BUT DIDN'T REALIZE IT UNTIL I TOLD THEM!!!
YOU WERE DRIVING HOG-WILD IN A CAR WITH DEALER'S LICENSE PLATES. THAT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE TO THE TRAFFIC COP THAT SPOTTED YOU. HE TAILED YOU HERE AND PHONED HEADQUARTERS. THAT'S HOW WE GOT YOU!
THE END

DR. NEFF
THE ORIGINAL GHOST BREAKER
DEBUNKS THE
SPIRIT PHOTO RACKET
OF ALL RACKETS, THOSE OPERATED BY "SPOOK" SWINDLERS" ARE THE MEANEST, BECAUSE THEY USE THE NAMES AND MEMORIES OF THE DEAD TO PREY UPON THE LIVING... THE WAYS AND MEANS OF THESE FAKERS ARE MANY, BUT HERE IS A CASE THAT STANDS OUT AS UNIQUE... I CALL IT - "THE HAUNTING OF HARGRAVE HALL" - AND LIKE MANY SUCH CASES, IT WAS HATCHED IN THE DARK OF THE MOON...
THAT OLD HOUSE GIVES YOU THE CREEPS JUST TO LOOK AT IT, PETE! NO WONDER OLD LADY HARGRAVE EXPECTS HER HUSBAND'S GHOST TO SHOW UP THERE!
SHE'LL DO MORE THAN EXPECT IT SHE'LL PAY FOR IT, IF SKEET BRINGS BACK THE DATA WE NEED! LOOK! SKEET IS BLINKING THE LIGHT! HE'S IN TITUS HARGRAVE'S STUDY!
OHMMMM!!!
HEAR THAT, BETH? IT'S FROM MY POOR LAMENTED HUSBAND'S STUDY!
IT MUST BE A PROWLER, AUNTIE! I'LL CALL THE SERVANTS!
CRASH!

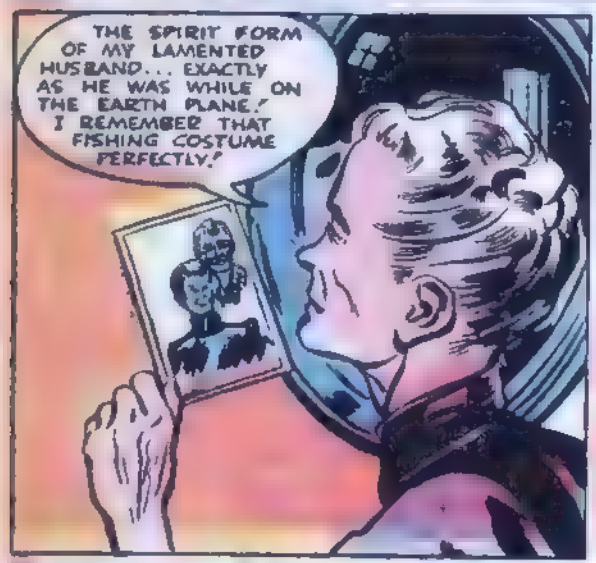
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

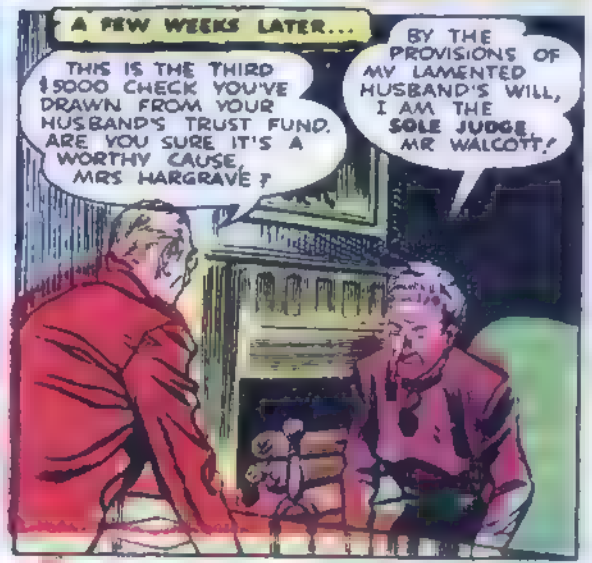
OHHH OOOHHHH OOHHHHH!!!
WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE AUNT LUCRETIA!
HEY WHAT'S THIS! SAY IT'S A QUICK WAY UP AND OUT!
CLICK!
THE GHOST I SAW IT TURN THIS WAY AND THEN IT VANISHED!
I'M SURE THERE'S A PROWLER AUNTIE! WE'LL SEARCH THE HOUSE!
GET A LOAD OF THIS JERRY! SKEET DID SUCH A NEAT DUCK-OUT LAST NIGHT THAT OLD LUCRETIA HARGRAVE THINKS HE WAS A GHOST!
MAYBE WE CAN USE SOME OF THAT JUNK SKEET TURNED OVER TO US! LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT IT.
GHOST SEEN IN HARGRAVE HALL
LOOK JERRY HERE'S THE STUFF YOU WANTED FROM THE OLD GUY'S STUDY I GOT IT BEFORE THINGS STARTED FALLING ..
IT'S NO GOOD NOW THEY KNOW THAT SOMEBODY WAS PROWLING THROUGH THE PLACE HERE'S FIFTY BUCKS GO LOSE YOURSELF!
THESE HOME MOVIES ARE REALLY SOMETHING! HERE'S OLD TITUS HARGRAVE ON A FISHING TRIP! HE SURE LOOKS FUNNY!
SO WILL YOU, PETE, WHEN YOU GET MADE-UP AS HIS DOUBLE WE'RE GOING AFTER THE HARGRAVE MILLIONS!

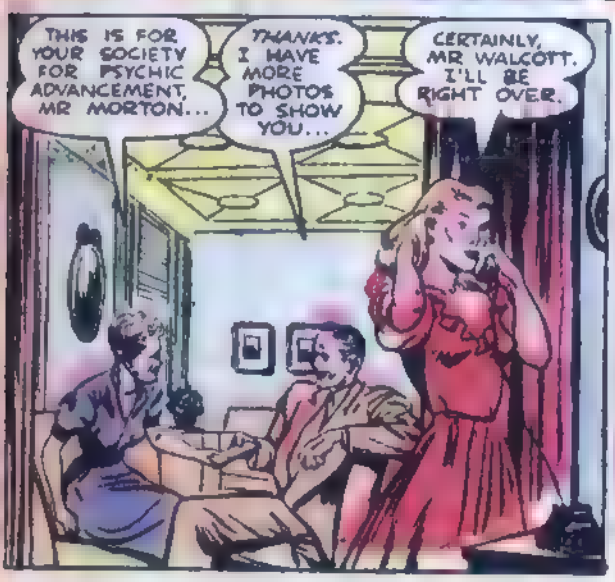
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


LATER...
YES, I BELIEVE MY HUSBAND'S SPIRIT HAS RETURNED AND IF YOU CAN PRODUCE NEW EVIDENCE TO PROVE IT, I SHALL BE MORE THAN GRATEFUL, MR MORTON!
IF YOU COME TO MY STUDIO TOMORROW, I PROMISE YOU RESULTS!

I AM SURE THAT WE HAVE THE PROPER PSYCHIC CONDITIONS MRS HARGRAVE! WHEN I HAVE TAKEN THE PICTURE, I WANT YOU TO WAIT WHILE I DEVELOP IT!


THE SPIRIT FORM OF MY LAMENTED HUSBAND... EXACTLY AS HE WAS WHILE ON THE EARTH PLANE! I REMEMBER THAT FISHING COSTUME PERFECTLY!


A FEW WEEKS LATER...
THIS IS THE THIRD $9000 CHECK YOU'VE DRAWN FROM YOUR HUSBAND'S TRUST FUND. ARE YOU SURE IT'S A WORTHY CAUSE, MRS HARGRAVE?
BY THE PROVISIONS OF MY LAMENTED HUSBAND'S WILL, I AM THE SOLE JUDGE, MR WALCOTT!


THIS IS FOR YOUR SOCIETY FOR PSYCHIC ADVANCEMENT, MR MORTON...
THANKS. I HAVE MORE PHOTOS TO SHOW YOU...
CERTAINLY, MR WALCOTT. I'LL BE RIGHT OVER.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

LET'S CHECK THE NEWSPAPER ADS FOR A GOOD PRIVATE DETECTIVE! WAIT-HERE'S SOMETHING BETTER: DR NEFF, GHOSTBREAKER!
THAT'S WHY LUCRETIA HARGRAVE'S BANKER, ROBERT WALCOTT AND HER NIECE, BETH HARGRAVE, CAME TO THE THEATRE WHERE I WAS APPEARING WITH MY FAMOUS SPOOK SHOW. . THEY COULD ONLY TELL ME THAT A "BLUE GHOST" HAD BEEN SEEN IN HARGRAVE HALL AND THAT JERRY MORTON WAS BLEEDING LUCRETIA HARGRAVE WITH HIS SPIRIT PHOTO RACKET.
AN INTERESTING STORY, MISS HARGRAVE, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS. NEITHER WILL YOU, AFTER I LOOK AROUND HARGRAVE HALL!
YOU CAN COME THERE TOMORROW WHILE AUNTIE IS OUT!
THE NEXT DAY
AUNT LUCRETIA KEPT THIS ROOM UNTOUCHED, HOPING THAT UNCLE'S SPIRIT WOULD RETURN
I PREFER THE PROWLER THEORY LET'S LOOK AT THE ROOM WHERE THE GHOST WAS LAST SEEN!
WHY.. WHY THAT PICTURE IS A SECRET DOOR! HOW DID YOU GUESS IT?
BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY WAY A PROWLER COULD HAVE LEFT THIS ROOM!
CLICK
NOW LET'S SEE SOME OF THOSE SPIRIT PHOTOS!
HERE THEY ARE!
THESE ARE ALL FAKED BY USING ULTRA-VIOLET LIGHT TO PENETRATE THE SCREEN BACKGROUND. THE PHOTO INCLUDES THE FACE OF SOMEONE HIDDEN BEHIND THERE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

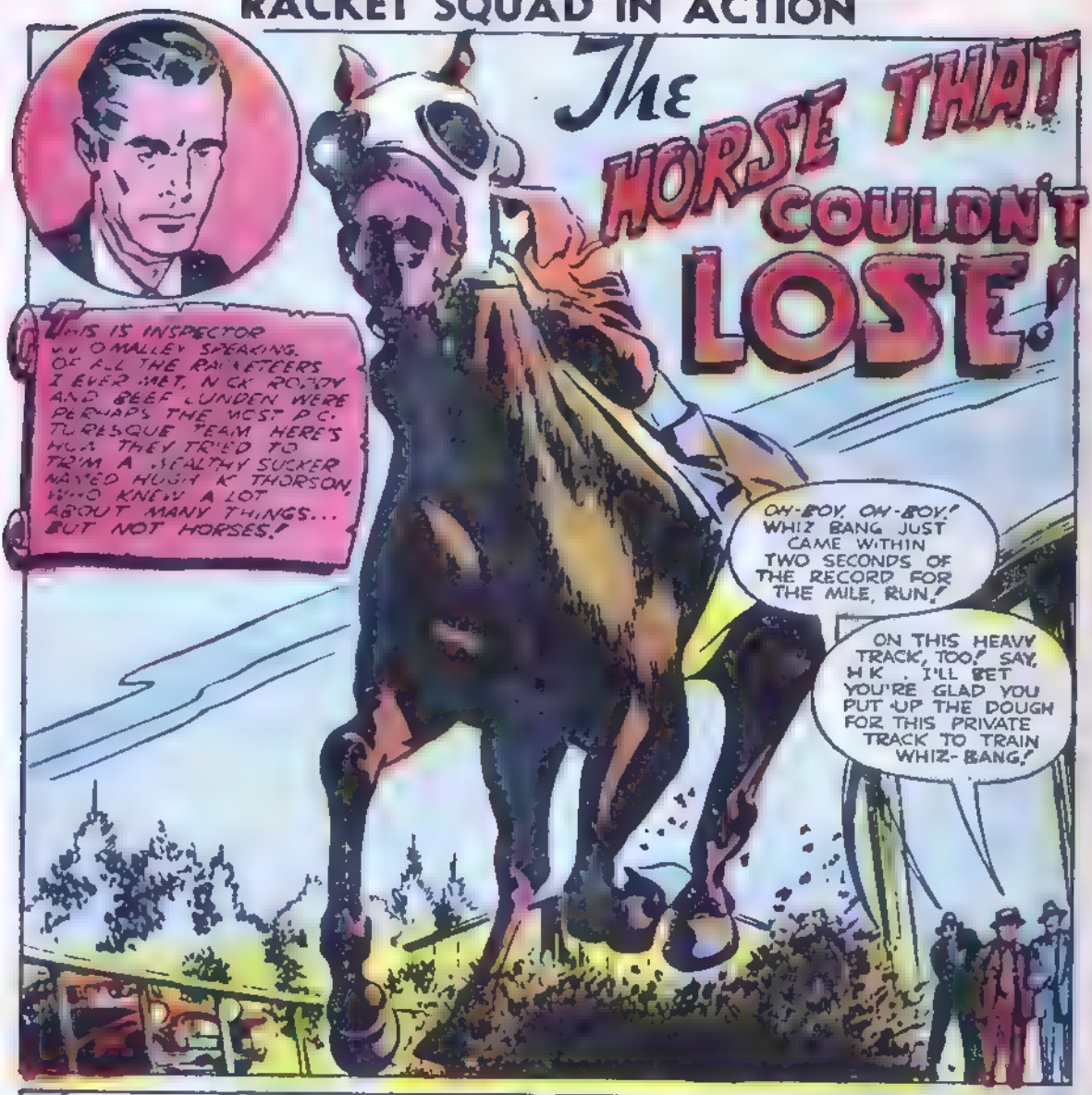
TELL YOUR AUNT TO ASK MORTON TO TAKE SOME SPIRIT PHOTOS HERE IN THIS HOUSE, WITH A COMMITTEE PRESENT IF HE FALLS FOR THAT, WE'VE GOT HIM!
I'M SURE I CAN ARRANGE IT!
WHILE BETH WAS MAKING THOSE ARRANGEMENTS, I MADE MINE! I CALLED ON MY OLD FRIEND INSPECTOR J J O MALLEY OF THE RACKET SQUAD TO CHECK THE RECORD OF A MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF JERRY MORTON .. AND O MALLEY ALSO AGREED TO BE ON MY COMMITTEE!!!
FROM WHAT YOU TELL ME, NEFF, I GAIN A GLIMMER OF YOUR PLAN
I'LL HAVE THE REST WORKED OUT
JERRY MORTON AND HIS SILENT PARTNER TOOK THE BAIT FOR A REASON I ANTICIPATED
WE'RE TAKING A BIG CHANCE JERRY GOING TO HARGRAVE HALL!
ALL YOU DO IS DUCK BEHIND THAT PAINTING SWEET TOLD US ABOUT AND MAKE-UP LIKE OLD TITUS HARGRAVE I'LL DO THE REST!
THE GUESTS ARE HERE NOW, MR MORTON. WHY... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FRIEND?
HE HAD TO LEAVE EARLY YOU CAN BRING EVERYONE IN, MRS HARGRAVE
I'M USING THIS PORTRAIT AS A BACKGROUND SO THAT IF A SPIRIT DOES APPEAR IT CAN BE COMPARED WITH THE PAINTING OF TITUS HARGRAVE.
NOW FOR ONE MORE ANGLE
JUST A MOMENT MR MORTON THE GHOST OF TITUS HARGRAVE MIGHT BE HAUNTING HIS OWN PORTRAIT, BECAUSE OF SOME EVIL SPELL. SO I BROUGHT ALONG THIS ANTIQUE WITCH-GUN!

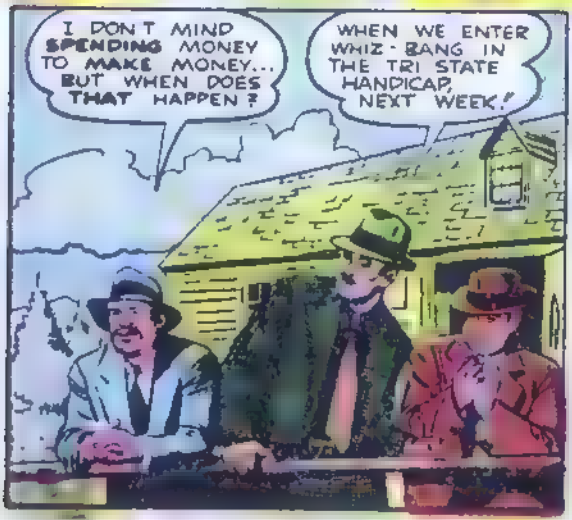
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

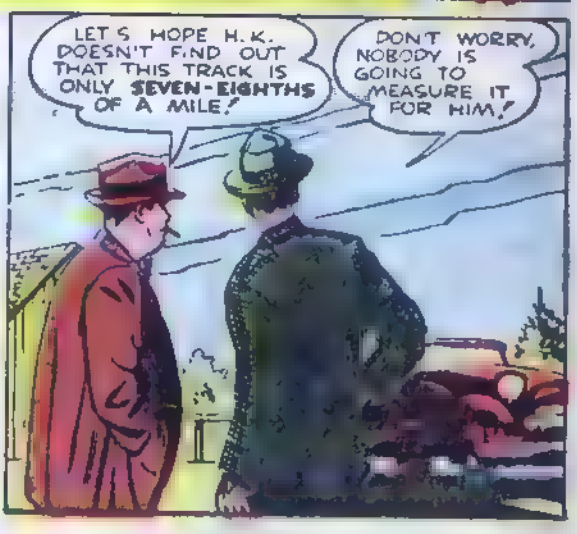
THIS GUN IS LOADED WITH A SILVER BULLET AND WHEN I FIRE IT THROUGH THE PORTRAIT'S HEART IT WILL BREAK THE SPELL...
NO, NO, DON'T SHOOT! I'M NO GHOST...
PETE, YOU FOOL! GET BACK IN THERE!
I'VE GOT THIS ONE, NEFF!
SO YOU'RE DR NEFF! WHY, YOU...
LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE BOTH OF THEM, INSPECTOR! NOW LET'S SEARCH THEIR STUDIO!
AT THE STUDIO
HERE'S MORE EVIDENCE, INSPECTOR!
WHY, THAT LOOKS LIKE OLD HARGRAVE'S FACE ON A TRANSPARENT BIT OF FILM!
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT IS, INSPECTOR! WHAT'S MORE, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW THESE FAKERS USED IT!
6

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

THEY STUCK IT ON THE CAMERA LENS SO WHEN THEY TOOK A PICTURE OF LUCRETIA HARGRAVE, THIS "SPIRIT EXTRA" APPEARED THERE WITH HER!
HERE'S THE VERY PHOTO THEY TOOK NEFF BUT WHAT'S THAT TRAY FOR?
ANOTHER GIMMICK FOR TAKING SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS
FLIP THE FLAP AND IT SWITCHES AN ORDINARY CAMERA PLATE FOR ONE THAT ALREADY HAS A SPIRIT FACE FAKED ON IT!
TAKE A LOOK, INSPECTOR!
YOU NEED A WITNESS TO SUPPORT SUCH CHARGES.
AND I HAVE A WITNESS JERRY! I'LL LET YOU MEET HIM!
LATER...
RECOGNIZE YOUR OLD PALS, SKEET?
SURE I DO, INSPECTOR THEY PAID ME A LOUSY FIFTY BUCKS AND WENT AFTER THOUSANDS WITH THE STUFF I GAVE THEM! THAT'S WHY I'LL TALK!
THESE PHOTOS THAT WERE TAKEN TONIGHT ARE THE CLINCHING EVIDENCE AGAINST THOSE FAKERS!
THANKS, DR NEFF AND ANYTIME I'M HAUNTED, I'LL SEND FOR YOU AGAIN!


The HORSE THAT COULDN'T LOSE!
THIS IS INSPECTOR WM O'MALLEY SPEAKING. OF ALL THE RACKETEERS I EVER MET, NICK ROMEO AND BEEF LUNDEN WERE PERHAPS THE MOST PICTURESQUE TEAM. HERE'S HOW THEY TRIED TO TRIM A WEALTHY SUCKER NAMED HUGH K. THORSON, WHO KNEW A LOT ABOUT MANY THINGS... BUT NOT HORSES!
OH-BOY, OH-BOY! WHIZ BANG JUST CAME WITHIN TWO SECONDS OF THE RECORD FOR THE MILE, RUN!
ON THIS HEAVY TRACK, TOO! SAY, H.K., I'LL BET YOU'RE GLAD YOU PUT UP THE DOUGH FOR THIS PRIVATE TRACK TO TRAIN WHIZ-BANG!


I DON'T MIND SPENDING MONEY TO MAKE MONEY... BUT WHEN DOES THAT HAPPEN?
WHEN WE ENTER WHIZ-BANG IN THE TRI STATE HANDICAP, NEXT WEEK!


LET'S HOPE H.K. DOESN'T FIND OUT THAT THIS TRACK IS ONLY SEVEN-EIGHTHS OF A MILE!
DON'T WORRY, NOBODY IS GOING TO MEASURE IT FOR HIM!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

WHIZ-BANG IS A HORSE THAT CAN NEVER LOOSE, WHERE WE'RE CONCERNED.
BECAUSE HE CAN NEVER WIN...
.. AND OUR GAME IS TO GET SAPS LIKE H.K. TO HAND US MONEY THAT WE CAN POCKET WITHOUT BETTING
I'D SAY H.K. WAS GOOD FOR TEN GRAND, EASY!
WELL, WELL, H.K.! THE BIG RACE IS TOMORROW. HOW ABOUT GOING TO THE COURSE TODAY, JUST TO GET IN TRIM?
A GOOD IDEA. I'LL TAKE YOU IN MY CAR.
WE'VE SPENT ALL OUR DOUGH, NICK CAN'T YOU TOUCH H.K. FOR SOME MORE?
LEAVE IT TO ME BEEF!
SO THESE ARE THE SCALES WHERE THE JOCKEYS WEIGH IN. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO ME?
PLENTY! I PAID THE WEIGHER $250 TO FIX THEM, SO OUR RIDER WILL SHOW FIVE POUNDS SHORT!
YOU SURE KIDDED H.K. INTO PAYING THAT DOUGH FAST!
WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE ME MAKE THE NEXT BITE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

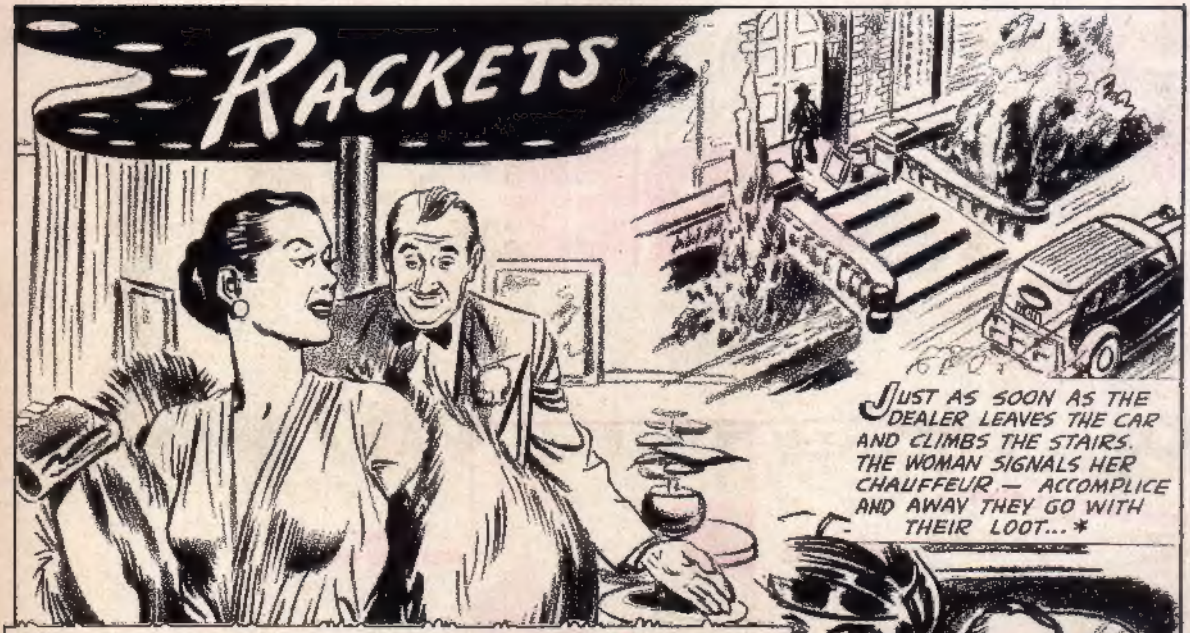
I NEED $500 TO PAY THE SPRINKLER MAN TOMORROW. HE'S GOING TO DAMPEN THE TRACK HEAVY BECAUSE WHIZ-BANG RUNS BEST IN MUD
A GOOD IDEA! HERE'S THE MONEY!
NOW I'VE SEEN EVERYTHING! THOSE SPRINKLERS ARE ONLY USED TO LAY THE DUST. I THOUGHT EVERYBODY KNEW THAT!
EVERY-BODY EXCEPT H K!
THE NEXT DAY...
WHAT?!! YOU'RE NOT GOING OUT TO WATCH WHIZ-BANG WIN?
I'D HAVE HEART FAILURE, H K.! AS FOR BEEF, HE HAS TO HOP AROUND AND PLACE OUR BETS. WHICH REMINDS ME, WHERE'S YOUR MONEY?
HERE YOU ARE, BEEF. TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS. PUT IT ALL ON WHIZ-BANG'S NOSE!
I'LL GIVE YOU MY THOUSAND LATER BEEF!
I KNOW WHY YOU AREN'T OUT AT THE TRACK. YOU DON'T TRUST ME!
HOW DID YOU GUESS IT? COME ON, LET'S DIVVY THAT TEN GRAND RIGHT NOW!
...HORSE NUMBER SEVEN IS WHIZ-BANG. ODDS FIFTY TO ONE...
TURN ON THE FOOTBALL GAME INSTEAD OF THAT STUFF, BEEF!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

OUT AT THE TRACK...
WHAT A CLOUDBURST! I NEVER SAW SO MUCH RAIN... IT'S FLOODED THE TRACK!
LOOK AT THAT WHIZ-BANG GO!
HE'S ALL MUD-HEN!
WHEEE!!! WHIZ-BANG WINS! I MAKE A HALF MILLION!
HEY... LEAVE THAT RADIO ALONE...
BUT GET A LOAD OF THIS, NICK...
WHIZ-BANG, WINNER OF THE TRI-STATE HANDICAP...
...WAS THE BIGGEST UPSET OF THE RACING SEASON! RATED AT FIFTY TO ONE...
H.K. WILL BARGE IN ANY MINUTE NOW AND START YELLING FOR HIS WINNINGS...
SO GET DOWN-STAIRS AND MAKE A DEAL WITH THE GUY ON THE DESK! TELL HIM TO BUY A FAKE DETECTIVE BADGE AND PRETEND TO PINCH US WHEN YOU PAY ME OFF. THAT WILL SCARE H.K.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

THERE GOES H.K. NOW. YOU GET THE IDEA OF WHAT WE WANT?
SURE, SURE. LEAVE IT TO ME.
I'VE WON HALF A MILLION, NICK... HALF A MILLION...
TAKE IT EASY, H.K. I'M A WINNER TOO... FIFTY GRAND'S WORTH - AND HERE COMES BEEF TO PAY US OFF!
I'LL PAY YOU FIRST, NICK, AND THEN GO OUT AND COLLECT THE BIGGER MONEY...
HOLD IT! I'M FROM HEADQUARTERS. WHAT GOES ON HERE?
?
COME ON... I'M TAKING THE TWO OF YOU DOWN TO HEADQUARTERS.
DID YOU SEE THE LOOK ON H.K.? I BET HE'S RUNNING FASTER THAN WHIZ-BANG, RIGHT NOW!
BOY-OH-BOY... HEY! THIS IS POLICE HEADQUARTERS! WHAT'S THE GAG!
INSPECTOR J. O'MALLEY
RACKET SQUAD
NO GAG AT ALL. WHEN I HEARD YOU TWO CON MEN WERE IN TOWN, I PUT MY BEST MAN, STEVE PRYOR, IN YOUR HOTEL TO WATCH YOU! APPARENTLY HE CAUGHT YOU AT SOMETHING.
I SURE DID, INSPECTOR... AND HERE'S THE EVIDENCE. IT BELONGS TO H.K. THORSON... IF WE EVER FIND HIM!
THE END


RACKETS
JUST AS SOON AS THE DEALER LEAVES THE CAR AND CLIMBS THE STAIRS. THE WOMAN SIGNALS HER CHAUFFEUR — ACCOMPLICE AND AWAY THEY GO WITH THEIR LOOT... *
HERE'S A RACKET WORKED ON ART GALLERIES AND AUCTION HOUSES. AN EXPENSIVELY GOWNED LADY BUYS $5000 WORTH OF MERCHANDISE, THEN TELLS THE DEALER SHE HAS LEFT HER MONEY AT HOME.. SHE TELLS HIM TO LOAD HER LIMOUSINE WITH THE PURCHASES AND HAS HER CHAUFFEUR DRIVE THEM TO A PRETENTIOUS MANSION. SHE THEN ASKS THE DEALER TO GET OUT AND KNOCK ON THE DOOR AND ASK HER BUTLER TO COME DOWN AND HELP CARRY THE MERCHANDISE IN.
* OF COURSE, THE LICENSE PLATES ARE NOT CORRECTLY REGISTERED AND THIS WOMAN DOESN'T LIVE IN THAT HOUSE.

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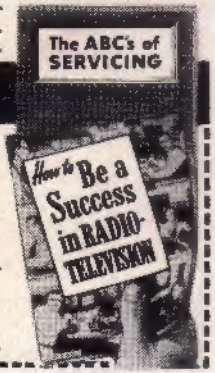

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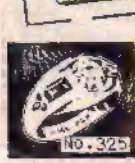

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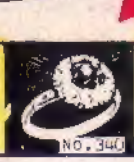

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